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ABSTRACT

This study surveyed fourth-grade students (N=677) and teachers (N=489) from China, Taiwan, and the United States regarding their views toward different classroom management strategies in dealing with four kinds of classroom behaviors: (1) causing a disruption by talking to other students; (2) giving a wrong answer to a question; (3) behaving well; and (4) giving a right answer. Respondents rated three to seven different management tactics for each behavior type. A random sample of 56 cases from the larger sample were analyzed and significant mean differences were found among the three nations. Teachers from China were least likely to "send note home"; teachers from Taiwan were most accepting of negative tactics; teachers from the United States were more likely to "send student to principal" and to commend the well-behaved student in private. Teachers from China and Taiwan supported "letting the student go to a special thing" when well behaved; teachers from Taiwan were more likely than others to agree that "hurting student a little" was appropriate for a disruption or wrong answer; and U.S. teachers preferred private praise to public praise. Of particular interest were findings that Taiwan differed from both China and the United States on several classroom management strategies. In most cases, students' preferences were consistent with their teachers' responses. (Contains 10 references and 9 tables of data.) (DB)

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The Perceptions of Teachers and Fourth-Grade Students from China, Taiwan, and the U.S. toward Classroom Management Strategies

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The Perceptions of Teachers and Fourth-Grade Students from China, Taiwan, and the U.S. toward Classroom Management Strategies

Classroom management has been of great concern of teachers, educators, and administrators (Lewis & Lovegrove, 1984). It has been commonly believed that effective management strategies can engage students in on-task activities, thus increasing their achievement in the long run.

Though cross-cultural studies have shown cultural variations in student achievement, the causal factors are still unidentified (Hess, Chang, & McDevitt, 1987). The findings of many studies imply that there is a positive association between teachers' managerial abilities and student achievement (Martin, Veldman, & Anderson, 1980; Fry, 1982). However, since most of the studies in the domain of classroom management have been conducted mainly with subjects in the western society (Salili, Hwang, & Choi, 1989). The results may not represent the cultural beliefs of another populations, such as China or Taiwan which outperform American subjects on mathematics achievement in international studies. As previous research (Ho, 1981; Stevenson, Stigler, Lucker, Lee, Hsu, & Kitamura, 1986; Salili, Hwang, & Choi, 1989) suggest, Chinese society

commonly accept the application of shaming and punishment to shape older children's behavior. This cultural perspective in child-rearing practice may have great impact on teachers' classroom management styles, thus influencing the achievement performance of children.

In addition, the focus of studies in the domain of classroom management has been on teachers' perceptions rather than students' perceptions (Turco & Elliott, 1986). In order to account for the cultural variations in achievement which may be influenced by teachers' classroom management styles, it is important to study both the perceptions of both teachers and students from different countries toward classroom management strategies.

This study surveyed fourth-grade students and teachers from China, Taiwan and the U.S. regarding their perception toward different classroom management strategies in dealing four kinds of classroom behaviors. These behaviors included 1) when a student disrupts the classroom by talking to other children, 2) when a student gives a wrong answer to a question s/he is expected to know, 3) if a student is well-behaved in the classroom, and 4) if a student gives a right answer. Three to seven different management tactics were generated from previous literatures for each type of behavior.

The design of the present study can help us understand how classroom management tactics are employed toward four types of classroom behaviors, including positive and negative behaviors and academic responses, in different cultures. Eventually, the findings may provide different perspectives to understand the cultural variations in children's mathematics achievement.

Method

Subjects

The present study recruited a total of 677 forth-grade students and 489 teachers from China, Taiwan, and the U.S. Schools were selected on the basis of educational, economical, institutional, and residential characteristics in a way that could increase variations in mathematics achievement levels. Schools in both urban and rural areas in each country was selected on the basis of their achievement performance.

Instrumentation

A questionnaire was developed by our research team as part of a larger mathematics achievement research. Likert scale was used to rate the subjects' perceptions concerning actions to be taken toward four types of classroom behaviors

(1 = strongly disagree or not at all important, 5 = strongly agree or very important). For instance , the subjects were asked to rate 7 negative interventions from 1 to 5 toward a student's disruptive behavior, 6 negative actions when a student gave a wrong answer, 5 positive strategies when a student is well- behaved, and 3 positive tactics toward a student's right answer.

Analyses

A random sampling of 56 cases out of the larger sample from three nations was conducted to achieve equal cell size in six groups (3 nations X teacher & students). The analyses included two separate comparisons. The first part investigated the cultural variations in teachers' perceptions toward different classroom management tactics, and the second examined students' perceptions. Descriptive statistics were computed on each strategy. Two-way analyses of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to examine whether there were significant differences between the mean responses of teachers and fourth-grade students from China, Taiwan, and the U.S.

Given significant mean differences were found ($p < .5$) between three nations, Post Hoc Comparisons Scheff'e Test were undertaken to locate these cultural variations.

Results

Descriptive statistics of the Likert-scale questions regarding actions to be taken by teachers toward four different types of classroom behaviors showed significant cross-national differences. Two separate analyses generated two sections of descriptive data. The first section presents teachers' perceptions in the order of China, Taiwan, and the U.S. toward four types of classroom behaviors- 1) when a student disrupted the class by talking to other students (Table 2); 2) when a student gave a wrong answer (Table 3); 3) when a student was well-behaved (Table 4); 4) when a student gave a right answer (Table 5), and the second part displays students' perceptions toward the same types of behaviors in the same order (Table 6-9).

Significant mean differences were found between China, Taiwan, and the U.S. to questions concerning the utilization of certain classroom management strategies toward four types of classroom behaviors. Results reported here only include the responses which display significant differences between one nation and the other two nations in accordance with the results of Post Hoc Comparison Scheff'e Test.

Teachers' perceptions

Regarding students' disruptive behavior (Table 2), teachers from China had lower preferences for the response "send note home" that teachers from Taiwan and the U.S. However, they rated "let student do special thing" as an important tactic when a student is well-behaved in the classroom (Table 4).

In contrast, teachers from Taiwan had the tendency to perceive negative tactics as appropriate actions toward students' inappropriate classroom behaviors. When a student talks in class (Table 2) and gives a wrong answer (Table 3), teachers from Taiwan had higher means on the responses "have a student stand in corner" and "hurt student a little" than teachers from the other two nations. They also had the tendency to more strongly agree with the actions "say the answer is correct" and "let student do special thing" when a student gives a right answer (Table 5).

The means of teachers from the U.S. are significantly higher than teachers from the other two countries on the response "send to principal" when a student talks in class. When a student gives a wrong answer, they did not hold as strong belief in "tell student s/he is bad". However, when a student is well-behaved, U.S. teachers had the tendency to choose "tell student s/he is good privately" instead of "tell student s/he is good in public". The result also showed that teachers from the U.S. did not rate "tell a

student s/he is good in public" as an important strategy when a student gives right answer".

Students' Perceptions

The students from China had significant lower means than students from Taiwan and the U.S. on the action "have student stand in corner when s/he is disruptive in the classroom" (Table 6). Their responses were consistent with their teachers' on "let student do special thing when a student is well-behaved in the classroom" (Table 8). However, they did not perceive "let parents know student is well-behaved" as an important strategy.

The responses of students from Taiwan revealed the same perceptions as their teachers on "hurt student a little" when a student disrupts the class or gives a wrong answer (Table 7). They also rated "not do anything" as the least important action when a student is well-behaved in the classroom.

U.S. students did not differ from students from the other two nations on most of the classroom management skills but "tell student s/he is good privately" and "tell student s/he is good in public" when a student is well-behaved in the classroom. Like their teachers, U.S. students preferred private praise rather than public praise.

Discussions

The analyses of the present study conclude that there are cultural variations in the responses of teachers and fourth-grade students from China, Taiwan, and the U.S. toward classroom management strategies. The cultural context may determine the practices of different classroom management models in different countries.

Several implications are revealed by this study. In term of behavioral and academic transgression, negative reinforcement techniques are more likely to be perceived as acceptable interventions to behavioral problems and for incorrect academic responses in Taiwan than China and the U.S. These results reflect Ho's (1981) statement that criticism and physical punishment are commonly accepted in Chinese society. However, the findings do not generalize across all Chinese society, but are limited in this research to Taiwan. The findings reported by Stevenson and others' (1986) observation of higher frequency in applying these negative tactics in Taiwan are supported. The use of self-report questionnaire in our study complements the validity of classroom observation which may influence teachers' classroom behavior (Lewis & Lovegrove, 1984)

The significant differences between Taiwan and the other nations may be due to the traditional Chinese child-rearing

belief of spanking children for inappropriate behaviors and incorrect answers. However, another Chinese country, China, does not significantly vary from the U.S. in the teachers' and students' perceptions toward negative reinforcement. The differences between subjects from China and from Taiwan could not be determined by this study. It suggests that classroom management in Taiwan is still strongly influenced by traditional Chinese child-rearing and discipline beliefs.

In contrast to the Taiwan subjects' perceptions of negative tactics, teachers and students from the U.S. appear to place emphasis on the assistance of principals and parents. On the contrary, teachers from Taiwan have the tendency to manage student classroom behaviors by themselves. These significant differences may be due to the different distributions of the responsibilities in student discipline. For example, school size in the U.S. is much smaller than that in the other two nations; thus, the U.S. teachers may be able to gain assistance from the principals more easily. In contrast, principals in China and Taiwan are not able to reach to student behavioral problems because of the much larger student populations. Therefore, there may be another administrator, such as vice principal or dean, who assist teachers in dealing with classroom management problems. However, for the perspective one who

was educated in Taiwan and as an observer, it is apparent that teachers tend to handle most transgressions themselves.

As the results suggest, U.S. teachers perceive private praise, not public praise, as an important strategy when their students are well-behaved. The same perceptions are reported by their students. The U.S. teachers' perceived preferences for private praise may have been influenced by the emphases of the detrimental effects of public praise on students' self-esteem if it is administered as an evaluation (Tauber, 1991)). In order to avoid the negative impact of public praise on students who seldom receive praise, the teachers hold stronger preferences for private praise. The similar responses of U.S. students toward private praise imply the influence of teacher's behaviors on students' perceptions toward the practices of classroom management strategies.

In contrast to the U.S. subjects' perceptions, teachers and students from Taiwan possess higher preferences for public praise in response to students' well-disciplined behavior and correct academic response. Perhaps both teachers and students from Taiwan perceive that public praise is an effective reinforcement for appropriate behavior and right answers than private praise.

Since the present study selected several schools with different achievement levels in both rural and urban areas

from China, Taiwan and the U.S., the findings are representative of the perceptions of teachers and fourth-grade students toward classroom management strategies in these cultures.

In addition, the selections of both disruptive or well-disciplined behavior and right or wrong answer, the findings are more comprehensive than studies which investigated the effectiveness of a single classroom management tactic. Though these variables were selected on the basis of the previous literature conducted in the U.S. The associations between teachers' and students' perceptions toward certain strategy seem to exist across all the three countries. This similar perceptions possessed by teachers and students from the same nation suggest that cultural context has great impact on the subjects' perceived acceptability of certain classroom management tactics. Moreover, teachers' management behavior and students' behavior may influence each others' perceptions. Further studies are recommended to examine the interaction between teachers' classroom management techniques and students' acceptability of these strategies across different cultures.

Though the present study concludes that the perceptions of teachers and fourth-grade students toward classroom management strategies among three nations, the findings are not able to reveal the connections between the perceptions,

the exact classroom behaviors and teachers' utilizations of different classroom management tactics in the classrooms. In order to account for the influences of classroom behaviors on students' achievement performance, it is important to conduct more studies of this issue in the future.

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Table 1. Questions and responses concerning classroom management strategies to be taken toward students' classroom behavior.

Behavior	Strategies	
	Negative	Positive
Disruptive	Ignorance:not pay attention Criticism: tell student s/he is bad Punishment: student stand in a corner; hit student a little Others: Send to principal, send note home; ask student to cooperate	
Wrong Answer	Ignorance: not to say anything Criticism: tell student s/he is bad Punishment: have student stand in a corner; hit student a little Feedback: say student is wrong, then give student the right answer	Encouragement: give student more information, then ask him/her to try again
Well-behaved	Ignorance: do nothing	Praise: tell student s/he is good privately; tell student s/he is good in public Reward: let student do special thing Others: let parents know student is well-behaved
Right Answer		Praise: tell student s/he is good in public Reward: let student do special thing Feedback (Approval): say the answer is right

Table 2. Results of Scheff'e Test of Planned Comparisons: Responses of teachers from three countries to questions concerning actions to be taken when a student disrupts the classroom.

		Country		
Actions		China	Taiwan	U.S.A.
not to pay attention	M	1.42	1.61	2.06
	SD	0.94	0.97	1.16
	N	56	56	56
	Sig.	U.S.	N/S	C
tell student s/he is bad	M	1.88	2.50	1.39
	SD	1.26	0.95	0.78
	N	56	56	56
	Sig.	T, U.S.	C, U.S.	C, T
have student stand in corner	M	1.10	2.45	1.20
	SD	0.44	1.20	0.62
	N	56	56	56
	Sig.	T	C, U.S.	T
hurt student a little	M	1.04	2.52	1.00
	SD	0.19	1.13	0.00
	N	56	56	56
	Sig.	T	C, U.S.	T
send to principal	M	1.24	1.36	1.97
	SD	0.59	0.98	1.10
	N	56	56	56
	Sig.	U.S.	U.S.	C, T
send note home	M	2.20	3.46	3.79
	SD	1.31	1.43	1.22
	N	56	56	56
	Sig.	T, U.S.	C	C
ask student to cooperate	M	4.83	3.97	4.39
	SD	0.65	0.87	0.96
	N	56	56	56
	Sig.	T, U.S.	C, U.S.	C, T

Note: 1 = not at all important 5 = very important
All comparisons shown are significant ($p < .05$).

Table 3. Results of Scheff'e Test of Planned Comparisons: Responses of teachers from three countries to questions concerning actions to be taken when a student gives the wrong answer.

		Country		
Actions		China	Taiwan	U.S.A.
not to say anything	M	2.29	2.37	2.32
	SD	1.14	1.30	1.29
	N	56	56	56
	Sig.	N/S	N/S	N/S
tell student s/he is bad	M	1.68	1.62	1.02
	SD	1.15	0.84	0.13
	N	56	56	56
	Sig.	U.S.	U.S.	C, T
have student stand in corner	M	1.00	1.39	1.04
	SD	0.00	0.78	0.27
	N	56	56	56
	Sig.	T	C, U.S.	T
ask student to try again	M	4.81	4.62	4.50
	SD	0.71	0.70	0.87
	N	56	56	56
	Sig.	N/S	N/S	N/S
hurt student a little	M	1.04	1.63	1.00
	SD	0.19	0.90	0.00
	N	56	56	56
	Sig.	T	C, U.S.	T
say student is wrong, then give the right answer	M	3.10	2.38	1.78
	SD	1.27	1.53	0.86
	N	56	56	56
	Sig.	T, U.S.	C, U.S.	C, T

Note: 1 = not at all important 5 = very important
All comparisons shown are significant ($p < .05$).

Table 4. Results of Scheff'e Test of Planned Comparisons: Responses of teachers from three countries to questions concerning actions to be taken when a student is well-behaved in the classroom.

		Country		
		China	Taiwan	U.S.A.
Actions				
not do anything	M	1.71	1.34	1.71
	SD	1.01	0.84	0.98
	N	56	56	56
	Sig.	N/S	N/S	N/S
tell student s/he is good privately	M	2.85	3.37	3.98
	SD	1.44	1.19	1.19
	N	56	56	56
	Sig.	U.S.	U.S.	C, T
tell student s/he is good in public	M	4.59	4.79	3.66
	SD	0.73	0.49	1.30
	N	56	56	56
	Sig.	U.S.	U.S.	C, T
let student do special thing	M	2.43	3.57	3.83
	SD	1.35	1.17	1.05
	N	56	56	56
	Sig.	T, U.S.	C	C
let parents know student is well-behaved	M	4.24	4.39	4.61
	SD	1.07	0.82	0.71
	N	56	56	56
	Sig.	N/S	N/S	N/S

Note: 1 = not at all important 5 = very important
All comparisons shown are significant ($p < .05$).

Table 5. Results of Scheff'e Test of Planned Comparisons: Responses of teachers from three countries to questions concerning actions to be taken when a student gives the right answer.

		Country		
Actions		China	Taiwan	U.S.A.
say the answer is correct	M	3.10	2.02	3.29
	SD	1.31	1.09	1.29
	N	56	56	56
	Sig.	T	C, U.S.	T
tell student s/he is good in public	M	4.31	4.64	3.30
	SD	0.97	0.55	1.25
	N	56	56	56
	Sig.	U.S.	U.S.	C, T
let student do special thing	M	2.31	3.36	2.73
	SD	1.39	1.23	1.38
	N	56	56	56
	Sig.	T	C, U.S.	T

Note: 1 = not at all important 5 = very important
All comparisons shown are significant ($p < .05$).

Table 6. Results of Scheff'e Test of Planned Comparisons: Responses of fourth-grade students from three countries to questions concerning actions to be taken when a student disrupts the classroom.

		Country		
Actions		China	Taiwan	U.S.A.
not to pay attention	M	2.05	2.00	2.29
	SD	1.61	1.58	1.42
	N	56	56	56
	Sig.	N/S	N/S	N/S
tell student s/he is bad	M	2.58	2.04	2.34
	SD	1.64	1.35	1.27
	N	56	56	56
	Sig.	N/S	N/S	N/S
have student stand in corner	M	2.07	3.11	2.93
	SD	1.46	1.65	1.68
	N	56	56	56
	Sig.	T, U.S.	C	C
hurt student a little	M	1.91	3.34	1.66
	SD	1.48	1.60	1.20
	N	56	56	56
	Sig.	T	C, U.S.	T
send to principal	M	2.20	1.96	2.84
	SD	1.58	1.49	1.46
	N	56	56	56
	Sig.	N/S	U.S.	T
send note home	M	2.93	3.45	3.76
	SD	1.77	1.64	1.35
	N	56	56	56
	Sig.	U.S.	N/S	C
ask student to cooperate	M	4.29	4.70	4.28
	SD	1.38	0.89	1.23
	N	56	56	56
	Sig.	N/S	N/S	N/S

Note: 1 = not at all important 5 = very important
All comparisons shown are significant ($p < .05$).

Table 7. Results of Scheff'e Test of Planned Comparisons: Responses of fourth-grade students from three countries to questions concerning actions to be taken when a student gives the wrong answer.

		Country		
Actions		China	Taiwan	U.S.A.
not to say anything	M	2.71	3.32	2.63
	SD	1.78	1.65	1.46
	N	56	56	56
	Sig.	N/S	N/S	N/S
tell student s/he is bad	M	2.13	2.54	1.86
	SD	1.56	1.61	1.29
	N	56	56	56
	Sig.	N/S	N/S	N/S
have student stand in corner	M	1.83	2.09	1.75
	SD	1.50	1.40	1.21
	N	56	56	56
	Sig.	N/S	N/S	N/S
ask student to try again	M	4.36	4.70	3.96
	SD	1.42	0.69	1.43
	N	56	56	56
	Sig.	N/S	U.S.	T
hurt student a little	M	1.66	2.94	1.43
	SD	1.31	1.52	0.99
	N	56	56	56
	Sig.	T	C, U.S.	T
say student is wrong, then give the right answer	M	2.98	4.07	3.18
	SD	1.73	1.39	1.47
	N	56	56	56
	Sig.	T	C, U.S.	T

Note: 1 = not at all important 5 = very important
All comparisons shown are significant ($p < .05$).

Table 8. Results of Scheff'e Test of Planned Comparisons: Responses of fourth-grade students from three countries to questions concerning actions to be taken when a student is well-behaved in the classroom.

		Country		
Actions		China	Taiwan	U.S.A.
not do anything	M	3.17	1.89	3.18
	SD	1.72	1.33	1.47
	N	56	56	56
	Sig.	T	C, U.S.	T
tell student s/he is good privately	M	3.05	2.63	4.00
	SD	1.70	1.42	1.21
	N	56	56	56
	Sig.	U.S.	U.S.	C, T
tell student s/he is good in public	M	3.96	4.09	3.23
	SD	1.33	1.15	1.35
	N	56	56	56
	Sig.	U.S.	U.S.	C, T
let student do special thing	M	2.49	3.29	3.68
	SD	1.66	1.51	1.28
	N	56	56	56
	Sig.	T, U.S.	C	C
let parents know student is well-behaved	M	3.67	4.38	4.30
	SD	1.60	0.98	1.14
	N	56	56	56
	Sig.	T, U.S.	C	C

Note: 1 = not at all important 5 = very important
All comparisons shown are significant ($p < .05$).

Table 9. Results of Scheff'e Test of Planned Comparisons: Responses of fourth-grade students from three countries to questions concerning actions to be taken when a student gives the right answer.

		Country		
		China	Taiwan	U.S.A.
Actions				
say the answer is correct	M	3.63	3.14	3.57
	SD	1.76	1.34	1.26
	N	56	56	56
	Sig.	N/S	N/S	N/S
tell student s/he is good in public	M	3.34	3.77	3.05
	SD	1.56	1.25	1.39
	N	56	56	56
	Sig.	N/S	U.S.	T
let student do special thing	M	2.47	3.11	3.19
	SD	1.66	1.30	1.28
	N	56	56	56
	Sig.	U.S.	N/S	C

Note: 1 = not at all important 5 = very important
All comparisons shown are significant ($p < .05$).